

Message Text

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AID-05 CEA-01 CEQ-01 CG-00 CIAE-00 CIEP-01 OFA-01

COME-00 DLOS-04 DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 EPA-01 ERDA-05

FMC-01 TRSE-00 H-02 INR-07 INT-05 JUSE-00 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 NSF-01 OES-03 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-04

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAL-01 AF-06 EA-07 EUR-12

NEA-10 /149 W

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6927

INFO PANCANAL

USCINCSO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION IAEA VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PANAMA 1545

E.O. 11652: NGDS

TAGS: PORG, PN

SUBJECT: MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS: MULTILATERAL INFORMATION ON
PANAMA

REF: STATE 37591

THIS MESSAGE IS THE EMBASSY'S RESPONSE TO THE
QUESTIONS ON MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS IN PARA 7 REFTEL,
KEYED TO LETTERING OF THOSE QUESTIONS:

1. (A) PANAMA'S OVERRIDING OBJECTIVE IN MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS
IS SUPPORT FOR HER POSITION RELATIVE TO THE
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PANAMA CANAL ISSUE AND TO THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR A NEW CANAL TREATY.

SHE SEEKS GENERALLY TO UTILIZE MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS AND CONFERENCES AS FORUMS FOR RAISING INTERNATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS ON THE ISSUE, OBTAINING THE SUPPORT OF OTHER STATES, AND ARTICULATING THIS SUPPORT TO A POINT WHERE IT BECOMES A FACTOR WHICH THE U.S. MUST CONSIDER IN OUR BILATERAL DEALINGS WITH PANAMA. HER DECISIONS AS TO THE TIMING OF MAJOR INITIATIVES IN THE UN (GA OR SC) OR ELSEWHERE IS RELATED TO HER PERCEPTION AS TO THE PROGRESS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. EVEN WHEN SATISFIED ON THE LATTER SCORE, NORMAL PRACTICE IS TO RAISE THE ISSUE IN DISCUSSIONS, AND TO SEEK RESOLUTIONS OF SUPPORT WHENEVER OPPORTUNITY PRESENTS ITSELF AS A MAINTENANCE DEVICE FOR THE SUPPORT SHE WOULD REQUIRE IF THE NECESSITY TO CONFRONT THE U.S. SHOULD ARISE. PANAMA'S POSITION ON OTHER MULTILATERAL ISSUES IS NORMALLY RELATED IN THE FIRST INSTANCE TO HOW MUCH ADVANTAGE HER SUPPORT ON SUCH POSITIONS MAY GAIN OR LOSE HER FROM OTHER MEMBERS ON THE CANAL ISSUE. SECONDARILY, SHE SEEKS TO DEMONSTRATE HER INDEPENDENCE OF THE U.S. (SEE PARA 5 BELOW). TO THE EXTENT THAT OTHER ISSUES ARE NOT DIRECTLY RELATED TO SUPPORT ON THE CANAL QUESTION, PANAMA'S OBJECTIVES GENERALLY RESEMBLE THOSE OF AN AVERAGE DEVELOPING COUNTRY, NEITHER ULTRA-RADICAL NOR PARTICULARLY OR CONSISTENTLY RESPONSIBLE, ESPECIALLY IN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL QUESTIONS. FINALLY, A SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE IS ALSO A SEARCH FOR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE BUSINESS AND/OR PERHAPS FOR HEAD-QUARTERING AN ORGANIZATION OR TWO, TO UTILIZE CONFERENCE AND VISITOR FACILITIES NOW BEING DEVELOPED AND TO PROMOTE HER INTERNATIONAL VISIBILITY. AMONG OTHER THINGS, PANAMA IS NOW SEEKING A POSITION ON THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY BOARD OF GOVERNORS (TO BE ELECTED AT THE SEPTEMBER 1976 AGENCY GENERAL CONFERENCE) AND A POSITION ON THE INTERNATIONAL LAW COMMISSION FOR DR. JORGE ILLUECA, A SENIOR FOREIGN MINISTRY ADVISER.

2. (B) OTHER COUNTRIES AND GROUPS OF COUNTRIES HAVE A CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE ON PANAMA'S MULTILATERAL POLICYMAKING DUE TO THE SEARCH FOR SUPPORT ON THE CANAL ISSUE--MOST DECISIONS NOT DIRECTLY RELATED TO THAT ISSUE ARE CONSIDERED FOR THEIR VALUE AS TRADE-OFFS ON IT. PANAMA SEEKS TO EXERT INFLUENCE ON OTHER GOVERNMENTS LARGELY AS RELATED TO THE SAME ISSUE. PANAMA FORMALLY JOINED THE NON-ALIGNED GROUP IN AUGUST 1975, AND THIS GROUP'S POSITIONS HAVE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF INFLUENCE, BUT THIS IS MORE DETERMINED BY CALCULATED DESIRE FOR FIRM NONALIGNED SUPPORT THAN

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BY A BASIC IDEOLOGICAL COMMITMENT ON THE PART OF MOST GOP LEADERS OR A BLIND WISH TO GO ALONG WITH THE HERD. DUE TO THE PRESENCE IN PANAMA OF AN INFLUENTIAL AND ARTICULATE JEWISH COMMUNITY, AND TO CLOSE BILATERAL AND ASSISTANCE RELATIONS BETWEEN PANAMA AND ISRAEL, THE LATTER CAN BRING PANAMA ALONG ON QUESTIONS OF FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE THROUGH DIRECT ACTION HERE. IN THE PAST, PANAMA WAS AS WEDDED AS MOST OTHER LATIN STATES TO THE IDEA OF LATIN SOLIDARITY IN REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL FORA. THIS IS TILL

AN IMPORTANT, BUT NOT OVERRIDING. STATES
IN THE AREA HAVING A PARTICULAR INFLUENCE INCLUDE VENEZUELA,
COLOMBIA AND COSTA RICA. THIS IS DUE IN PART TO THEIR STATUS AS
PANAMA'S NEAREST NEIGHBORS (AND TO VENEZUELA'S MONEY), BUT IS DUE
EVEN MORE TO THE PERSONAL INFLUENCE OF THEIR
RESPECTIVE PRESIDENTS, PARTICULARLY CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ, ON
PANAMANIAN CHIEF OF GOVERNMENT TORRIJOS--HE LISTENS TO AND RESPECTS,
EVEN IF HE DOES NOT ALWAYS HEED, THEIR ADVICE.

3. (C) NO TO ALL THREE QUESTIONS. GOP DELEGATES TO MOST INTER-
NATIONAL MEETINGS, AND ITS PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES TO
ORGANIZATIONS, NORMALLY RECEIVE ONLY THE MOST GENERAL GUIDANCE,
WITH EMPHASIS ON THE CANAL ISSUE. DELEGATION REPORTAGE IS SCANTY,
AND CONTROL BY FOREIGN MINISTRY OR OTHER INTERESTED GOP
AGENCIES HERE IS A TENUOUS, PARTICULARLY SINCE GOP
PERSONNEL RESOURCES ARE SO THIN THAT PERSONNEL WITH
TECHNICAL QUALIFICATIONS TO MAINTAIN ANY BUT THE MOST GENERAL
CONTROL OVER MOST MEETINGS ARE AT THE MEETINGS, NOT IN PANAMA.
INSTRUCTIONS FROM CAPITAL DURING MEETINGS APPEAR TO BE RARE AND
RELATE ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY TO ISSUES OF MAJOR POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE
EVEN IN THESE CASES, AS WAS DEMONSTRATED OVER KOREAN QUESTIONS AT
30TH UNGA, FOREIGN MINISTRY INSTRUCTIONS ARE OFTEN FAR FROM THE
LAST WORD.

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PANAMA 1545

4. (D) PANAMANIAN REPRESENTATIVES IN NEW YORK AND AT OAS HAVE RELATIVELY FREE HAND AS THEY BOTH ARE POLITICALLY MORE POWERFUL THAN THE ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER THEY ARE USUALLY RESPONSIVE ONLY TO SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS FROM TORRIJOS WHEN HE CHOOSES TO GIVE THEM, OR TO FOREIGN MINISTRY INSTRUCTIONS WHEN IT SUITS THEM TO BE SO. THEIR INFLUENCE IS PARTLY DUE TO PERSONAL POLITICAL BASES IN PANAMA BUT MORE DIRECTLY TO THEIR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH TORRIJOS. BOYD, IN NEW YORK, PRODUCED A MIRACE FOR TORRIJOS WHEN HE DELIVERED THE SECURITY COUNCIL IN 1973. HE HAS SINCE BEEN PREMIER ADVISER ON MULTIALTERAL AFFAIRS IN UN AND GENERALLY, AND HE HAS MAINTAINED GREAT INDEPENDENCE OF FOREIGN MINISTRY. PITTLY SHARES INDEPENDENCE FREQUENTLY ACCORDED OAS PERMREPS. WE UNDERSTAND HE WAS RECENTLY TOLD BY TORRIJOS TO CONFIDENTIAL

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COOL HIS FREQUENT AND VITRIOLIC ATTACKS ON U.S. HOWEVER, HIS RHETORIC ALSO SERVES A PURPOSE IN DEMONSTRATING PANAMA'S "INDEPENDENCE" OF U.S. PANAMANIAN REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER ORGANIZATIONS GENERALLY HAVE CONSIDERABLE AUTONOMY THROUGH BEING REGARDED AS SPECIALISTS IN THEIR ORGANIZATIONS' AFFAIRS. SAME IS TRUE OF DELEGATIONS TO CONFERENCES--PANAMA'S GENERAL POLITICAL COURSE IS ALREADY SET, AND THOSE IN GOP COMPETENT TO DISCUSS TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF ISSUES CONSIDERED ARE GENERALLY AT CONFERENCE, NOT HERE.

5. (E) IN THE PAST, PANAMA HAD NORMALLY BEEN RECEPTIVE TO U.S. REPRESENTATIONS ON MULTILATERAL ISSUES IN WHICH HSE HAD NO DIRECT CONFLICTING INTEREST. THIS IS CHANGING. PANAMA AND THE U.S. ARE, BY PANAMA'S DEFINITION, ON OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE CANAL ISSUE. THEREFORE, PANAMA CANNOT VERY WELL SEEK OUR SUPPORT ON ITS FUNDAMENTAL MULTILATERAL CONCERN, NOR CAN SHE BE OVERLY RESPONSIVE TO OUR CONCERNS ABOUT THE SUBJECT'S HANDLING IN MULTILATERAL FORA, ON OTHER ISSUES, PANAMA HAS ADOPTED A POLICY OF SEEKING TO DEMONSTRATE HER EMERGENCE AS AN INDEPENDENT ACTOR ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE AFTER SPENDING MOST OF HER INDEPENDENT LIFE IN WHAT SHE AND MANY OTHER NATIONS HAVE PERCEIVED TO BE THE LONG SHADOW OF THE U.S. THUS, A WELL-KNOWN AND STRONG U.S. EFFORT ON A QUESTION OTHERWISE OF LITTLE DIRECT SIGNIFICANCE TO PANAMA, PARTICULARLY A QUESTION ON WHICH A SIGNIFICANT SEGMENT OF THE NONALIGNED COUNTRIES ARE OPPOSED TO OUR POSTION,CAN BACKFIRE BY PROVOKING

A MORE NEGATIVE PANAMANIAN REACTION THAN MIGHT OTHERWISE HAVE OCCURED. THIS APPEARS TO US TO HAVE BEEN THE CASE WITH REGARD TO THE KOREA ISSUE AT THE 30TH UNGA.

6. FINALLY, BECAUSE THE CANAL ISSUE OVERSHADOWS IN IMPORTANCE FOR PANAMA ALL OTHER BILATERAL AND MULTIATERAL ISSUES, PANAMA IS NOT EASILY INFLUENCED BY THREATS, VEILED OR OTHERWISE, OF ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES TO HER OTHER INTERESTS SHOULD SHE FAIL TO FOLLOW THE LEAD OF THE UNITED STATES ON A MULTILATERAL ISSUE. SUPPORTIVE OF THIS ATTITUDE IS PANAMA'S PERCEPTION THAT THE UNITED STATES ALSO:

1) CONSIDERS ITS OVERALL INTERESTS IN THE CANAL AND PANAMA TO BE OF AMJOR IMPORTANCE:

2) THE U.S. IS VULNERABLE ON THE CANAL ISSUE; AND

3) WILL NOT REACT TO PANAMA'S ACTIONS IN INTERNATIONAL
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FORA IN SUCH A MANNER AS TO ENDANGER THE POSSIBILITY OF OBTAINING A NEW CANAL TREATY WHICH SAFEGUARDS U.S. INTERESTS IN PANAMA.

7. NON-TREATY-RELATED BILATERAL ISSUES ARE CONSIDERED IN PANAMA AS MANIFESTATIONS OF THE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS RATHER THAN AS A SEPARATE QUANTITY POTENTIALLY RELATABLE BY EITHER SIDE TO MULTILATERAL ISSUES. ANY SUGGESTION BY THE U.S. THAT PANAMA'S CONDUCT ON MULTILATERAL ISSUES MAY AFFECT OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS IS THEREFORE SEEN AS EMPTY--AND THE ABSENCE OF ANY VISIBLE CONCRETE REACTION AFTER PARTICULARLY EGREGIOUS EXAMPLES OF PANAMANIAN CONDUCT (E.G., KOREA AT THE 30TH UNGA AGAIN) IN THE PAST HAS SIMPLY CONFIRMED THIS PERCEPTION THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT A HIGHLY SPECIFIC BILATERAL QUID-PRO-QUO APPROACH ON MULTILATERAL ISSUES OF PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE TO THE U.S. MIGHT NOT WORK, PROVIDED THAT IT WAS CARRIED OUT IN PRIVATE AND BEFORE PANAMA HAD BECOME PUBLICLY LOCKED INTO A POSITION. HOWEVER, WE HAVE NEVER TRIED SUCH AN APPROACH, AND GENERALIZED REFERENCES TO OUR BILATERAL RELATIO BNN UNTIL THE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS ARE DONE AND A NEW TREATY IS IN FORCE, SIMPLY WILL NOT BE BELIEVED.

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